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ABSTRACT

Noting that many instructional routines discourage complex thought and language, a study examined how teachers and children used language in the first 3 weeks in 3 preschools. Specifically it explored how teachers talk to children, what teachers ask children to do with language, and what children say in school. The language features of teacher-child and parent-child interaction were contrasted. Teachers use simplification techniques to direct and monitor a child's actions, and the child does not think or talk in complex ways, usually responding in fragments. In a transcribed videotaped interaction, 80 percent of a teacher's talk consisted of directing and monitoring, while 20 percent conveyed or elicited new information. In adult-child interaction, adults convey new information by describing and demonstrating, by explaining their thought processes, and by asking open-ended questions. Children also ask questions of adults. Both use complex language uttered in complete sentences. In a taped example, 60 percent of the utterances conveyed and elicited information. However, videotapes of classroom interaction during the first 3 weeks of school showed that the classroom teachers exhibited many of the behaviors of the single teacher-child interaction. Teacher-student interactions were asymmetrical, with students following the teacher's agenda. These characteristics suggest that many complex language functions from homes do not thrive at schools. (Transcripts and tables of complexity of videotaped interactions are included.) (TM)

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Learning What to Say and When to Say it in the First Days in Preschool

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Learning what to say and when in preschool

In this presentation I would like to share some of my observations of how teachers and children use language in the early weeks of preschool. In collaboration with Paula Levin, in the Culture and Learning department, I videotaped children and teachers in three preschools during the first three weeks of school. In this presentation I ask: How do teachers talk to children in the early days of school, what do they ask children to do with language, and what do children say in school.

My main questions are: 1) Which language functions do we emphasize and train for in school? 2) Do these reflect our stated goals - developing elaborate, explicit language? 3) How do children use language in different ways at home? 4) Do we value these other functions? 5) Do we train for or provide opportunities to develop these skills in school? 6) If not, why not? And how might we?

To give you a preview, my main point is that although we value complexity of thought and language, many instructional routines discourage this.

To explore this issue I first describe the language features of one teacher-child interaction. I compare these features to those of a parent-child interaction. My purpose is to describe

the positive features of each and differences between them. Then I consider whether these interactions are representative. Do the features of the first interaction reflect interactions in preschools? Does the second interaction resemble parent-child contacts in middle-American homes? I try to address why language functions used at home do not thrive at school. At the end, I describe how teachers have tried to incorporate these features in their programs.

Didactic teacher-child interactions

In the sections I will be analyzing in the interactions in Tables 1 and 2 and comparing them. Before you read them I would like to give some background.

The teacher-child interaction in Table 1 is from a book by Blank, Berlin and Rose, entitled, The language of learning. In this book, the authors present a model of early language learning and techniques for structuring preschoolers' language. Blank has developed a language curriculum based on this model, which has been applied extensively throughout the country. The teacher-child interaction reprinted in Table 1, is presented by the authors as an example of a teacher effectively simplifying a problem. According to the model, she simplifies the task, leads the child through each step of it, and encourages the child to talk about each step.

The second interaction is between a father and 4-year-old son. This is from a book by Joan Tough, entitled Talking and learning. Tough presents this as an example of spontaneous, parent-child conversation. The interaction reflects the inquisitiveness of 4-year-olds in middle American homes - their tendency to follow parents around asking endless "what" and "why" questions.

As you read these, it would be helpful if you could note a few things. First of all, what do you see as the major differences between the two interactions? Secondly, does the teacher-child interaction resemble interactions you have seen in classrooms? If so, in what ways? If not, how is it different? Finally, does the father-child interaction resemble interactions you have had with your own children - at 3 or 4. [Ask people to read the interactions and give their impressions.]

What I would like to do is present my analysis of the interactions and show how this relates to interactions I've observed in preschools. Then we can discuss these issues in terms of your impressions and observations of elementary classrooms.

Teacher-child interactions

My first question about this interaction was: What is the teacher doing? Basically, she defines a problem (how does this nutcracker work?); she breaks the problem down into component

parts, and then leads Joanna through each step while encouraging her to talk about them.

She defines the problem in the first sentence: "Now we have to make this work so it will break the shells." She tells Joanna to look at the handle, turn the handle and notice how it turns a screw in the cup. She asks her to speculate about what would happen if she put a nut in the cup and turned the handle. Joanna fails to speculate so she asks her to try it. Then she asks her to describe what happens to the nut and to point out its different parts. She tells Joanna to watch how to get the nut out. Finally, she asks her to label the object and show understanding of the context in which it is used.

At each step, the teacher directs Joanna by telling her what to do or by asking an instructional question, such as: "Which part broke into places?" Joanna does what she is told and answers some of the questions. When she responds correctly, the teacher praises her. She say: "Good," "You're doing a really good job," and, "That's really fine."

The teacher uses language to direct and monitor Joanna's actions. She has a particular agenda - teaching how to use and talk about a nutcracker. She directs Joanna through the agenda and monitors her progress. She simplifies demands when Joanna has troubles. When Joanna fails to answer, "Do you remember what we call the thing to crack nuts?, the teacher simplifies the

question. "Do you think it's called an apple-cracker or a nutcracker?"

Joanna uses language and gestures to follow the teacher's agenda. When she responds correctly, she indicates she is on track.

According to Blank's model, teachers demonstrate strategies for thinking and talking in interactions such as this. The purpose of the strategies is to help children think and talk in complex, explicit ways. However, in this interaction, Joanna does not think or talk in complex, explicit ways. The teacher seems to do most of the work. Joanna answers a few relatively simple questions.

Complexity of speech and thought

To test this impression I applied some standard measure of complexity of speech and thought. These findings are presented in the first column of Table 3.

As you see in row 1, the teacher does almost all the talking. She utters 340 words; Joanna utter 19.

Teacher and child have the same number of speaking turns, but the teacher speaks during all of them, while Joanna speaks during less than half. On 66% of her turns Joanna communicates with gestures (she nods, points or performs the requested action), or fails to respond.

As you see in row 3, the teacher speaks almost entirely in complete sentences, while Joanna speaks almost entirely in fragments. 75% of her utterances are fragments such as: "This," "The nut," "The shell," "Like that," "Turning the handle," and, "Nutcracker." She utters only two complete sentences: "It got into pieces," and "Give me the nutcracker." Consequently, Joanna's mean number of words per utterance (2,4) is very low - compared to the teacher's and for a 4-year-old.

I would not conclude that Joanna is unable or unwilling to speak in full sentences. Fragments are exactly what this situation calls for. The teacher implicitly asks Joanna to follow her agenda for figuring out how to use a nutcracker. Joanna's role is to follow the routine and periodically indicate <u>that</u> she if following.

The teacher monitors her progress. She asks fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice and yes-no questions, such as: "Which part broke into pieces?" "Was it the shell or was it the part we could eat?" and "Will we be able to take the nut out?"* Questions of this kind call for fragments. All that is required is an appropriate word, a nod, a yes or no. * She starts with more complex, open-ended questions - "what is this called?" - but when she encounters silence or shrugs, she simplifies to multiple choice, and finally, yes-no type questions.

Joanna is not asked to convey to the teacher anything the teacher does not already know. Therefore she does not need to use complex, explicit speech. If many school interactions consists of following the teacher's agenda, when do children have the opportunity to develop and express their own?

It is also clear from the numbers in row 5 that the teacher sets the direction of the interaction and the child follows. The teacher introduces all new topics of conversation: Joanna introduces none.

A final feature I looked at was: how complex are the demands the teacher makes on Joanna? Does she elicit complex or simple thought and language? To measure this I used a system of levels of complexity developed by Blank, et al. I will not describe these levels in detail, but have provided a partial description in Table 7 if you want to look at this later. I want to point out, though, that 87% of demands made on Joanna are at the two lowest levels of complexity.

Primarily, she asks Joanna to follow directions, describe ongoing events, label objects and imitate sentences. Language is used to describe and follow rather than reason, organize or speculate.

The teacher does most of the talking and thinking in this lesson. She defines the problem, breaks it into parts and puts

the parts together. Joanna's is asked to describe what the teacher does.

How Joanna and the teacher use language

Teacher and child use language in specific ways in this lesson. I examined their utterance and came up with 8 ways they use language. These are listed in Table 4, with examples from the two interactions.

The 8 categories fall into 3 main categories: 1) using language to direct and monitor another's actions; 2) using language to convey and elicit new information; and 3) using language to follow another's agenda.

To direct and monitor Joanna's actions, the teacher tells her what to do, ask closed-questions, and praises her when she stays on track. To follow the teacher's agenda, Joanna answers questions and obey her directives.

Profiles

As you can see in column 1 of Table 5, the teacher mainly directs and monitors Joanna's actions (85% of her utterances). Joanna mainly follows the teacher's agenda (100% of her utterances). The interaction is asymmetrical rather than reciprocal. They rarely convey or elicit new information, or communicate.

Summary

The simplification techniques advocated by Blank et al. may be useful in early language learning - but in their place and as means to an end. It is important to look carefully at what is and is not getting accomplished in such interactions.

One claim is support of the technique is that Joanna learned to use the nutcracker. But a 4-year-old might learn this more easily by being shown how it works and left to explore it on his or her own.

A second claim is that Joanna learned to talk about each step in discovering how to use it. But as we saw, Joanna did very little talking.

A third claim is that she observed an organized way to explore new objects, which she will apply in future situations. However, 1) the teacher did almost all the work, so it is not clear what Joanna learned; and, 2) if most teacher-child interactions are structured to this extent, when do children have the opportunity to develop and use adaptive thinking and talking? When do they have the opportunity to define problems, break them down, deal with each part and integrate their information to solve the problem. In some language programs, the teacher performs these operations for the children. Children fill in the blanks once the thinking and organizing have been down.

The main step which seems to be left out of programs is to have children complete these processes on their own. The teacher

could ask Joanna to explain to her or to a peer, how to use the nutcracker. Language, in this case is for communication.

On the other hand, structuring techniques may provide children with routines or frameworks within which they can later express themselves and reason. It may be that a curriculum which complements structured with unstructured tasks provides both necessary conditions. The problem, then, is only when the majority of classroom interactions are tightly controlled.

Is this comparable to classroom interactions?

I wondered whether the interaction was comparable to interactions in preschools I observed. I will deal with this in detail later but first want to show a tape of one interaction.

It might be useful to listen to what the teacher says and to code her utterances in terms of the categories in Table 4. Briefly, adults direct children by commanding, suggesting, correcting and restricting. Teachers monitor children by praising or punishing their actions. I code praise as positive feedback (PF), punishment as a directive. Teachers also control by asking closed questions for which they already know the answer.

Adults convey new information by explaining, demonstrating and describing. They also explain their perceptions, intentions, wishes and thought processes. They elicit new information by asking open-ended questions (OQ).

This sequence occurred in the second week of school. My point is that even one-to-one interactions are tightly structured in school. [Show segment 1: teacher talks to children about their pictures of happy and sad faces. Have people try to code the interaction and then tally these codes. Pass out Table 5.5 once they have tried coding. Ask them what they came up with.]

Findings

I transcribed and coded the interaction and found that 80% of the teacher's talk consists of directing and monitoring. Only 20% consists of conveying or eliciting new information. She asks many closed questions and keeps children from straying off task - for example, she cuts Wade's story short.

These children came to school babbling to responsive adults. By the third week they learn to limit responses to one or two word phrases. Longer sentences were sometimes discouraged because they cut into the group's time and organization. The point I am trying to make is that children do not have to be exceptionally slow to revert to fragmented language in school. Typical instructional routines involve fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice and yes-no questions which call for fragments. These may also call for fragmentary thinking. On the other hand, children do learn to take turns and stay on topic and these frameworks may enable elaborate communication later.

Father-child interaction

I analyzed the father-son interaction as a contrast to teacher-child exchanges. What occurs in home interactions which is missing at school? Do we value features of spontaneous interaction? How are these incorporated in school talk? How might we incorporate them?

As you read this interaction could you think of how it differs from the teacher-child contracts. Do you think these differences are simply due to differences in kids - maybe David is a lot smarter or more verbal than Joanna? Or might they stem from differences in the nature of the interactions? [Ask people their opinions]

Differences

In this interaction, each has an agenda. The father tries to paint the gutters; David tries to figure out what he sees and hears. The father's agenda is not focused solely on David, as the teacher's is on Joanna. David's agenda is not focused solely on his father - though he tries to elicit his help in understanding events.

In the teacher-child interaction, the adult asks questions - the child answers. In this interaction, the child asks questions - the father answers.

As you can see in Table 3, the interaction is reciprocal. Father and son talk about the same amount: 198 to 194 utterances.

They take turns setting the topic of conversation. David introduces 55% of the topics; the father introduces 45%.

Their language is equally complex. Both speak during all their speaking turns, in contrast to Joanna who gestures during many of hers. They both utter complete sentences, in contrast to Joanna who speaks in fragments. They both have high MLU's - 7.3 and 7.1 - contrast to Joanna's 2.4. Furthermore, 64% of David's utterances are at the most complex levels of talk (Levels III and IV), in contrast to Joanna, who functions at high levels only 13% of the time.

A recurrent pattern is: David expresses interest in an object or event; he asks his father about it; and his father explains it. The father then asks open-ended questions to extend his thinking.

It may be that David uses complex speech and thinking because the situation calls for it. He wants to communicate. He attends to events which interest him, and tries to figure them out. He asks his father for help - in the form of information. To do this he needs to explain exactly what he wants, perceives, thinks, and plans to do. He tries to convey information which his father does not already know, and to elicit new information. To do this requires explicit, elaborate language.

Language uses

David and father also use language differently than do teacher and child. If you look at the second column of Table 5, you see that 60% of their utterances have to do with conveying and eliciting information. In contrast the teacher and Joanna engage in directing and following.

Father and son talk about what they are doing, thinking and planning. They ask each other's opinions. They state observations. They think out loud. These are important features of communication. The most complex thinking and talking is required when you want to convey something to a person who does not already understand. They are in this kind of situation. This kind of situation may not arise frequently, at school. To test this possibility, I analyzed how preschool teachers talk to children in the early weeks of school.

How preschool teachers talk to children

I taped three classrooms during the first weeks of school, for 7 to 8 hours each. The tapes were transcribed. I categorized the first 400 utterances of teachers for each school.

As you can see in Table 6, teachers exhibit many of the same behaviors as the teacher in Table 1. They direct, command, correct and restrict children 53% of the time. They ask closed questions to keep children on track. They praise children for keeping on track. Only 18% of their talk is geared toward conveying or eliciting new information.

These dynamics occur during one-to-one interactions. They are particularly true of interactions in groups. I would like to show three videotape segments to demonstrate this point.

In the first, the teacher encourages children to talk about their homework - bringing in circular objects. Routines - such as turn-taking and staying on topic - are set. Children use single words or pointing to stay on track.

[show segment]

In the second segment, the teacher makes cookies with the children. She asks a number of instructional questions. She asks children to describe and compare objects and ingredients. The children have not yet learned the verbal routines (bigger/smaller) and incorrectly answer some questions.

[show segment 2]

In the third segment, the teacher uses an interesting object but asks children to do uninteresting, facile things with it: "Say 'It's a bell'".

Conclusion

In conclusion, many language and thinking functions seem to be getting short shrift in school. These functions may be critical for the development of adaptive intelligence. I do not think this is the fault of individual teachers. Teachers have to interact with several children at once. It is difficult to exercise these skills in group interaction. Teachers may also be

constrained by ingrained beliefs that instruction consists of structuring, developing clear, specific agendas, and carrying these out.

The teachers I observed tried different ways to sandwich in communicative interactions. One teacher talks to children individually at rest. She asks them about pictures they drew, stories they heard, and about home, and she writes their narratives. They understand she wants to hear new information and they eagerly provide it. Another teacher encourages elaborations during small group sessions.

Furthermore, routines which are rigidly set up in the early days of school may be used a frameworks for elaborate communication later in the year. This occurs, however, only if the teacher moves beyond the routine. They are means to an end, but often they are taken as ends in themselves.

In a final segment of videotape, I try to show how one teacher incorporates the positive elements of home interactions into a classroom interaction. She asks children about a film they just saw, on trucks. She uses pictures to stimulate the discussion.

In this sequence, she asks open-ended questions which require children to speculate and give opinions. She listens to their personal experiences and asks for information she does not already have. She describes and demonstrates new objects,

explains her intentions, states her preferences and opinions. She tells stories about home - modeling how to do this - and maintains their interest with actual communication. She simplifies and scaffolds tasks - but only after children have shown interest in the problem. She looks for ways to elicit real information in simple terms, rather than simplifying the contact to a rote following of her agenda. Children are eager to talk to her and blatantly imitate how she speaks and thinks.

[Show first minutes of final segment]

Conclusion

Highly structured instructional routines do not occur only in the first weeks of preschool, or only in preschool. A large body of research on classroom interactions in middle-American school indicates that most contacts are asymmetrical, with the student following and filling in the teacher's agenda. It is assumed, I guess, that children passively acquire the strategies teachers perform and model. This may be a large assumption. In fact, children may have to practice complex thinking and speaking outside of school. This seems inefficient.

Furthermore, the asymmetry of interactions may be more or less tolerable to children from different cultures. Many school interactions seem geared toward detailed conformity of thinking rather than complexity or elaboration of thought and language. When routines are treated as if ends in themselves, important

learning gets omitted and relatively unimportant skills get over-trained.

TABLE 1

DIDACTIC TEACHER-CHILD INTERACTION

Teacher and Joanna (4 years) examine a nutcracker.

1. Teacher: (holding the nutcracker) Now, we have to make this work so it will break the shells. Look carefully. There's a part on it that moves. Look and see if you can find which part moves.
2. Joanna: (carefully examines the nutcracker and then points to the stem).
3. Teacher: That's right. If you turn it, it will move. Go ahead and try it.
4. Joanna: (turns handle while the teacher holds the nutcracker)
5. Teacher: What happens when you turn this? (pointing to the screw).
6. Joanna: This... (gestures in a way to indicate that the screw moves into the cup).
7. Teacher: And what do you think would happen if we put a nut in there?
8. Joanna: (says nothing)
9. Teacher: Well, let's try it and see what happens. Here, take a nut and put it in (hands Joanna a nut).
10. Joanna: (takes a nut and puts it into the cup of the nutcracker).
11. Teacher: Good. Now go ahead and turn it.
12. Joanna: (intensely starts to twist the screw)
13. Teacher: That's hard work. You're doing so well at it. (cracking sound) Look at the nut. What happened?
14. Joanna: It got into pieces.
15. Teacher: Which part broke into pieces?
16. Joanna: The nut.
17. Teacher: Was it the shell of was it the part we could eat?
18. Joanna: The shell.
19. Teacher: Very good. Now that the shell is off, we can eat it. But how are we going to get the nut out of the nutcracker? (pulls at the nut to show the child that the nut is stuck).
20. Joanna: (pulls at the nut)
21. Teacher: No, we just won't be able to get it out that way. We have to do something else. Let me show you. (takes nutcracker and starts turning the handle in the opposite direction) What am I doing?
22. Joanna: Like that (gestures).
23. Teacher: Yes, I'm going like that I'm turning the handle. You say that.

24.Joanna: Turning the handle.
25.Teacher: That's right - I'm turning the handle. And now will we be able to take the nut out?
26.Joanna: (nods)
27.Teacher: Okay, take it out, put the shell in this cup and put the part that we can eat on this plate.
28.Joanna: (puts both the shell and the meat of the nut on the plate).
29.Teacher: Yes, I wanted this (pointing to the meat of the nut) on the plate, but I didn't want the shells there... Here, put the shell in this cup.
30.Joanna: (does it)
31.Teacher: That's very good. Now we're going to eat this part. (pointing to the meat of the nut). But before we do, let me ask you something. Do you remember the name of the thing we used to break the nut open?
32.Joanna: (no response)
33.Teacher: Let me see. Do you think it's called an apple-cracker or a nutcracker?
34.Joanna: Nutcracker.
35.Teacher: That's right and next time that you want to crack some nuts and you want to use my nutcracker, what will you say to me?
36.Joanna: Give me the nutcracker.
37.Teacher: That's really fine.
[Blank, et al. 1978, pp. 101-104]

TABLE 2

SPONTANEOUS PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION

A father, about to paint the gutters of his house, talks to his four-year-old son.

1. David: See me, I'm climbing up this ladder.
2. Father: Be careful, I don't think it's safe.
3. David: I'm safe. I can climb high - watch me.
4. Father: (going to ladder) I'm watching, but come down and I'll hold the ladder.
5. David: No, I don't want you to hold it.
6. Father: I must because the ladder's not firm. See, you're wobbling.
7. David: (coming down) Why is it wobbling me? Let me see.
8. Father: Look, the path is not even here, it's not level.
9. David: It's bumpy here.
10. Father: It's not level - can you see? The path's sloping. If you put this stone under this side, that will make it level here.
11. Father: Now it's firm. It's not wobbly, see.
12. David: No, it's not wobbling now - it's firm, cause it's level, isn't it? The stone's made it level - I'm going up now.
13. Father: No, no, sorry, not now. I'm going to paint the gutters.
14. David: You mean the window things?
15. Father: The window-?
16. David: The straight bits at the bottom I mean.
17. Father: The window sills? No, the gutters - and the drainpipes. See those pieces that go along the edge of the roof, and these pipes?
18. David: That's where the rain comes down isn't it?
19. Father: Yes - do you know what the gutters are for?
20. David: It's for when the rain comes - and it goes hard down all a roof and the water all runs off, doesn't it?
21. Father: Mm, that's it.
22. David: And sometimes it runs over and comes splashing down. That's what it did with my ball, didn't it?
23. Father: Yes - your ball blocked the gutter, didn't it?
24. David: And we got all wet by the door.
25. Father: Yes, why was that?
26. David: You know - my ball stopped the water going into the pipe. And when you got it out the water could run out again, and it did. And my ball splashed when you got it down.
27. Father: It was a mess, wasn't it. There I'm going up now.
28. David: Why do you paint the gutter?

29. Father: Well - what do you think?
30. David: To stop the rain.
31. Father: Do you think paint will stop the rain?
32. David: No - I mean to stop it getting wet.
33. Father: Well, it - the paint will protect the gutter, stop he water getting to the metal, so it won't rot away.
34. David: But the paint will get wet, won't it. Will that rot away?
35. Father: It will wear away in time and I will have to paint it all again in about 4 or 5 years.
36. David: No, I can do it then, can't I?
37. Father: We'll see if you're big enough.

From Tough, J. Talking and learning. New York: Ward Lock Education Associates, 1977.

TABLE 3

COMPLEXITY OF LANGUAGE IN A TEACHER-CHILD VS. PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION[1].

	Teacher-child interaction		Parent-child interaction	
	Teacher	Joanna (4)	Father	David (4)
Number of words spoken by:	340	19	198	194
Percent of all words in interaction:	95%	5%	50%	50%
Number of speaker turns which are verbal, for:	19	8	19	18
Percent of all turns by that person which are verbal, rather than gestured:	100%	44%	100%	100%
Number of complete sentences by:	36	2	23	27
Percent of utterances which are complete sentences, rather than fragments:	95%	25%	88%	100%
Mean number of words per utterance (MLU) for:	7.79	2.4	7.07	7.30
Number of new topics initiated by:	18	0	13	16
Percent of all new topics in the interaction:	100%	0%	45%	55%
Percent of person's utterances at:				
Level I		40%		0%
Level II		47%		36%
Level III		13%		21%
Level IV		0%		43%

1. For interactions described in Tables 1 and 2

TABLE 4

CATEGORIES OF LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

	Category	Examples
TO DIRECT AND MONITOR THE OTHER'S COURSE OF ACTION	Directs, commands or makes suggestions to the other	-Now, we have to make this work so it will break the shells. -Look carefully. -Look and see if you can find which part moves. -Here, take a nut and put it in. -You say that.
	Asks closed questions for which the answers are already known	-What happens when you turn this? -Which part broke into pieces? -Was it the shell or was it the part we eat -Is this a nutcracker or applecracker?
	Gives positive feedback: praises or compliments the other	-That's right. -Good. -That's very good. -That's really fine.
TO CONVEY AND ELICIT NEW INFORMATION	Offers information, describes, labels or demonstrates something to the other	-It's not level--can you see? The path's sloping. If you put this stone under this side, that will make it level.
	Expresses own wishes, opinions or intentions: explains what s/he is doing and why	-I'm going to paint the gutters. -It was a mess wasn't it. -There I'm going up now. -No, I don't want you to hold it.
	Asks open-ended questions for which the answers are not already known	-Why is it wobbling me? -You mean the window things? -Why do you paint the gutter?
TO FOLLOW THE OTHER'S AGENDA	Answers other's questions	-Next time...you want to use my nutcracker, what will you say to me? C: Give me the nutcracker.
	Obeys other's directives, accepts suggestions	-T: Go ahead and try it. C: (does so) -T: You say that. C: (repeats phrase)

TABLE 5

HOW INTERACTANTS USE LANGUAGE IN A TEACHER-CHILD VS. PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION[1].

	The interactant:	Teacher-child interaction		Parent-child interaction	
		Teacher	Joanna (4)	Father	David (4)
TO DIRECT	Directs, commands or makes suggestions to the other	38%[2]	0%	18%	11%
	Asks closed questions for which the answers are already known	26%	0%	9%	0%
	Gives positive feedback: praises or compliments the other	21%	0%	3%	0%
TO CONVEY OR RECEIVE INFORMATION	Offers information, describes, labels or demonstrates something to the other	14%	0%	15%	39%
	Expresses own wishes, opinions or intentions: explains what's/he is doing and why	0%	0%	21%	21%
	Asks open-ended questions for which the answers are not already known	0%	0%	9%	14%
TO FOLLOW	Answers other's questions	0%	53%	12%	11%
	Obeys other's directives, accepts suggestions	0%	47%	13%	4%
	Total utterances	42	15	33	28

43%[3]

50%

60%

1. For interactions described in Tables 1 and 2
2. Percent of all utterances or gestures by that interactant

TABLE 5.5

TRANSCRIPT AND CODING OF TAPED INTERACTION

Teacher	Child	Code
Let's see, tell me about this one.		Open request
	Sad	
Sad. S...A..D And this one is _____?		Closed question
	Happy.	
Happy? You sure?		
	(nods)	
Thank you. Christine, Christine, you don't have a yellow ticket. You can't go in there. Did I give you a yellow ticket?		Corrects Restricts Closed questior
	(nods no)	scolds
You have to work out here.		Directs
Stand in line, Wade.		Directs
Ah, look at this one! So ____?		Closed questio
	Sad.	
Sad. Take this, put it in the box, and then you may work over there.		Directs
Kennyste was here first, you have to wait your turn.		Corrects/direc
Ah, happy!? Very good Kennyste.		Praises
You did it.		Praises
It's nice.		Praises
Kennyste, look, look at me.		Directs
I like it.		Gives opinion
Put it in the box and then you may work.		Directs
Tell me about this one, Wade.		Open request
	It's an elephant.	
It's an elephant?		Closed questi
	And this one is going to the zoo.	
But where are your happy and sad faces?		Open questior
	(nods yes)	Directs
Where, where are your happy and sad faces?		Open questio
	Right over here.	Directs
Which one is this, happy or sad?		Open questior
	This one's sad; this one's happy.	Directs
Sad and happy (writes) Do you have a story about it? Why is this one happy?		Open request Open request
	'Cause this one is happy drinking the straw...drinking a straw... 'cause he's eating a straw.	
He's sad because he's eating straw?		Closed quest
	Yeah.	
Oh, my goodness.		

TABLE 5.5 (cont)

Teacher	Child	Code
	'Cause he's fighting the guy 'cause he's bad.	
He's bad?		Closed questi
(turns to other child)	Yeah, 'cause the guy shoots from this end and it goes over here...	
Okay, put this in the box, and then you may work.		Directs
Just a minute, stand in line.		Corrects/ Directs
Here, it's got your name.		Directs
This is _____?		Closed quest
	Dog.	
A dog.		
Okay, Christine, I'm coming.		States inten
What is the dog doing?		Closed quest
	Running.	
Good, Jean, tell me about this face.		Closed reque
	(Points)	
Yeah, what about it?		Closed quest
Which one is happy?		Closed quest
	(Points)	
This is the happy face. Hapoy.		
And what about this one? Not happy?		Closed quest
	(nods)	
What?		Closed quest
	Mad face.	
Mad.		
Did you make a sad one?		Open questi
	Huh?	
Did you make a sad one?		
	(nods)	
You didn't make any sad one.		
You just made happy and _____ mad?		Closed ques
	(nods)	
Okay.		
Here, Jean, put this in the box.		Directs

TALLY OF CODES

Directs, corrects, restricts	16	33	Directs or monitors child	80%
Gives positive feedback: praises	4			
Asks closed question, for which she already knows the answer	13			
States her intentions	1	9	Conveys or elicits new information	20%
Asks open questions	8			

TABLE 6

HOW FOUR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS USE LANGUAGE IN THE FIRST WEEKS OF SCHOOL

	Language function	Number of utterances	Percent of total	
TO DIRECT	Directs, commands, suggests, corrects, scolds or restricts the child	656	53%	
	Gives positive feedback: praises or compliments the child	219	18%	82%
	Asks closed questions for which the answers are already known	137	11%	
TO CONVEY OR RECEIVE INFORMATION	Offers information, explains, describes, labels or demonstrates something to the child	116	9%	
	Asks open-ended questions for which the answers are not already known	75	6%	18%
	Expresses own wishes, opinions or intentions: explains what she is doing and why	42	3%	
	Total utterances (school 1=411; school 2=414; school 3=420)	1,245	100%	